

## Senate Bill 561

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity today in speaking with you.

My name is Nicholas Kokas, Vice President of Global Operations for Brentwood's DET headquartered in Macomb Township Michigan and I am in support of Senate Bill 561.

I would like to start off by speaking to you of the negative impacts in real life terms on how requiring bond plates since 2000 has impacted our industry.

Since 2000, the largest taxi cab and luxury sedan company comprised of over 200 vehicles has now gone out of business. Fiscally business's such as restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues are experiencing lost revenues due to chauffeurs not advising leisure and business travelers to enter cities such as Detroit. In a time when business's are desperate for work the city of Detroit has created an environment that forces chauffeurs to simply avoid the city.

Enforcement of these laws has also been a nightmare. Police officers have harassed chauffeurs with high profile clients in vehicles forcing them into taxi cabs while the officer determines if the chauffeur is really licensed or not. This is not the image we want perceived across the United States when individuals are coming here in order to do business. On several instances deals are not done because of the negative unfriendly business environment. In the majority of the cases that I am familiar with the citations are written illegally. The result of these illegally written tickets is a financial strain on limousine companies. Companies can not afford legal fees on a regular basis fighting tickets they should not have received in the first place. I can tell you personally my company had 3 tickets thrown out because they were illegally written and to cost me several thousands of dollars in attorney fees in order to have proper representation in the matters.

According to Limousine and Chauffeured Transportation which is the leading trade and researching publication for limousine companies in the United States, 85% of all limousine companies are considered small business. There is a perception that the limousine industry is filled with glitz, glamor and wealth when in reality they are small business's struggling in a down economy.

This amendment also levels the playing field between taxi cabs and limousine operators. While taxi's are only governed by their city bond regulations, limousine companies are required to adhere to both city and State regulations. State regulations are considerably stricter than city regulations with the examples of requiring a minimum \$1,000,000.00 in liability insurance as well as annual state vehicle inspections done by licensed registered mechanics with the State of Michigan.

Another point I would like for everyone here to understand is that our industry serves as Ambassadors to our State. For these out of town decision makers their chauffeur is the first impression and point of contact when

entering the region and their chauffeur is also their last. Please help us put our best foot forward when showing these travelers around, that Michigan is a place to do business by supporting Senate Bill 561.

At this time I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have as I may be of help since I was involved in the Amendments of the limousine law in 2000 and have been involved with the National Limousine Association on National legislative issues as well.

Thank You!

Nicholas Kokas  
VP Global Operations  
Brentwood's DET  
[www.detlimo.com](http://www.detlimo.com)